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25 October 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)


SUBJECT : HTAUTOMAT Capabilities

1. The HTAUTOMAT facility in its various stages of development has been closely related to Project AQUATONE from the beginning. I have depended upon that office for PI guidance in regard to AQUATONE equipment, processing problems, and, once missions were accomplished, for the prompt handling of the return and feedback for operational guidance.
2. In addition, HTAUTOMAT has provided numerous services to the research elements not only of this Agency but of the military services.
3. It is my observation, and I believe that of other organizations dependent upon the work of HTAUTOMAT, that high quality work has been produced promptly and skillfully frequently under stringent time limitations and at times requiring extensive overtime.
4. As the amount of material from AQUATONE has increased, the needs for photo interpretation with attendant laboratory support and handling of materials in the TALENT system have grown rapidly. In the face of the needs and the limitations of personnel, it may be that we will have to be satisfied with a more selective exploitation of materials at a greatly reduced pace. Whereas I have not explored the matter, it may be that some of the pressure might be removed from HTAUTOMAT if the Services, and in particular the Air Force, were to be expected to conduct more of the photo interpretation work.
5. In considering the personnel status in HTAUTOMAT, it might be worthwhile to consider carefully whether over the long pull HTAUTOMAT should not be an expanding industry within the DD/I's purview. Within existing ceilings, such a conception might adversely affect other activities or interests, some of which upon a careful examination might turn out to be of a much lower priority. Consideration of this question, of course, must take into account the prospects for photographic intelligence from new sources which would evolve.

6. Let me say in conclusion that my main purpose in this note is to commend to you the work that HTAUTOMAT has been doing and to call your attention to certain considerations which flow from personnel limitations under which HTAUTOMAT must work while recognizing that I am in no position to evaluate the importance of the work of HTAUTOMAT as compared with the other functions under your supervision.


RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Project Director

- 1-DD/I
- 2-AD/RR
- 3-AD/CR
- 4-Chief/HTAUTOMAT
- 5-TSO CIA
- 6-TCO CIA
- 7-Project Director
- 8-TCS chrono


JOK:cw